# CHRISTIAN WORSHIP NOT SYMBOLICAL.

## A SERMON

PREACHED IN ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, ASTORIA, L. I.,

*ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29th*, 1868,

BY

R. W. HARRIS, D. D.,

RECTOR OF THE PARISH.

New York:
HALLET & BREEN, PRINTERS, 60 FULTON STREET.
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TO THE

Christian Friends,

WHO REQUESTED ITS PUBLICATION,

THIS DISCOURSE

ON

"CHRISTIAN WORSHIP,"

IS DEDICATED

BY THEIR PASTOR,

IN

Christian Love.

# SERMON.

"Jesus saith unto her, woman believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. * * * * * * * But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."—JOHN iv: 21—23.

What change did the gospel make in divine worship? This is a most interesting and important inquiry, just at this time, in our Church. What is Christian worship in contradistinction to Jewish worship? Who can tell us but Christ, "the author and finisher of our faith," and the founder of the gospel dispensation? And, how could he have told us more plainly, and decidedly, and authoratively, than he has done in the words which he spake to the Samaritan woman, when she introduced the subject of worship, and sought his decision as a prophet, upon a point in dispute between her own people and the Jews, in relation to "the place where men ought to worship?"

This dispute had been in times past, and would continue to be, so long as the Law of Moses was in force, a dispute of moment. God had said, that "in Jerusalem men ought to worship." It was his strict injunction that they should so do, because *there* he had recorded his name, and *there* he had promised his blessing—*there* had his temple been erected, and *there* the services and ceremonies of divine worship had been positively, and exclusively, and permanently established in all its grandeur of pomp and circumstance, in accordance with the very exact appointments of the Jewish ritual. Therefore, thither, to Jerusalem and its temple, must all resort, at the appointed seasons, to

offer homage, and to worship, as had been of old ordained. Samaritan worship was permitted by no authority of law, or of usage, and was condemned beside, as being mixed with idolatrous practice, "Ye worship ye know not what," said Jesus to the woman—"we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews." But then, as to your inquiry about the place of worship, he continues—whether in this mountain of yours, called Gerazim, or in Jerusalem where is the temple of God with its ritualistic service—"believe me," woman, your question is of no importance *now*, for the place of worship is no longer a matter of divine institution or of necessary observance. Hereafter, it will not be either here or there, that men will worship God by his own appointment; nor yet in any other particular place will he record his name. Place is unimportant since the whole Jewish economy is shortly to be abolished and utterly done away, and a new Dispensation—the Gospel Dispensation—erected in its stead, which will so differ from the former outward formal system, that *now* (for the hour for this change has in fact already come, and "now is") an inward worship will be established in place of a ceremonial, and "the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him;" and this, because "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

We have given the evident and natural signification of Christ's words—the only meaning indeed which can be put upon them, and they are full to the point that Christianity abolished ceremonial worship, and established spiritual. The sayings of Jesus were uttered with far-reaching purpose. They were intended to apply not merely to the occasion which called them forth, but to future exigencies. They contained principles ever to remain and become the standard of truth in regard both to religious doctrine, and to religious practice. The "words" of Jesus Christ, "they are spirit and they are life." These are the law and the

testimony by which we are to try the soundness of all teaching, and determine what is error and what is truth. Our text is a passage clear and explicit regarding divine worship, as well prophetic of the change Christianity would introduce into the service of God, as imperative of such change.

No one will pretend that the Jewish ceremonial law is in force now. All but the Jew declare that it has ceased in obligation. But the question is, did Jesus Christ appoint another ceremonial worship? Did he intend that another should be established under the gospel? Did he permit another such service to come in as the worship of Christianity? Did he not rather signify that such a worship should not be set up, and forbid its establishment by the injunction—uttered just in the connection in which he placed it—"God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth"? In answer to these inquiries, let us observe why the Jewish ceremonial law was done away. That ceremonial law was very imposing and grand, and calculated to hold the minds of the multitude in solemn reverence. Every thing which could make worship striking to the senses was introduced:—the many priests in official garments; the glitter of gold and costly service; the incense from numerous censers; the smoke of sacrifices; the vast assembly gathered in silent homage within the courts of the august temple, so adorned with art and rich embellishment; the sacred fire ever burning; the luminous cloud resting upon the tabernacle, which filled the temple with glory; the cherubim shadowing the mercy seat.—these, with other emblems of magnificence,—"of which we cannot now speak particularly," surpassed in grandeur all human conception, for God himself was the author. He contrived this worship and ordained these ritualistic observances, as "the example and shadow of heavenly things—as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle; for See, saith he,

that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount."

Why then do away with all these ceremonies of divine worship; raze this temple to the ground; scatter its ornaments of blue, of purple, and of gold; disband its priesthood; extinguish the incense; forbid the burnt offering; roll away the cloud of glory, and say to the Jew: Thy venerable worship is at an end; all thy customs must be forgotten; thou canst not worship as did thy fathers, nor come before me with any of Moses' rites. "The hour has come" for a change. Moses must yield to Christ; the law must be superseded by the gospel; men must not continue any longer the outward ceremonial, but offer the inward worship—the higher worship of spirit and of truth? Why this change, we again ask, in divine institution? Can there be any answer but this—that all that system of Moses was emblematical, was a system of types, designed to shadow forth the gospel of Christ, and to find its final and complete fulfillment in what Jesus Christ did and suffered for mankind, and could have no significance or propriety after his death and ascension into heaven, and that then that system was to cease utterly with those events?

Had the ceremonial law not been thus emblematical and temporal, why did it not continue and remain in force after Christ? Its abrogation plainly proved its uselessness.

Moreover, proper as were those rites and imposing as were those ceremonies, considered as types and shadows of grand transactions about to take place, according to prophetic voice, and of "good things to come," in Messiah's days, would they have been tolerable in those ancient times without such significancy, had they not been established by the command of God, or ordained for such a purpose? If originating in man's device; if sanctioned only by human law; they had been as heathen institutions—idle vanities, puerile display, vain pomps with no pertinency or benefit as regarded the souls of the worshippers. There must have

been, as there was, a typical character in those ordinances and a divine institution beside, to have rendered the services of the ancient sanctuary, either of obligation or advantage.

Again; there were, it may be, wise reasons wherefore it was salutary or necessary to burden those earlier ages of the world, and especially the Jewish people, with manifold ordinances and cumbrous ceremonies. They may have been suited to those times, and to the preparatory stages of human improvement. But under them all men were taught that those things were but shadows. They were directed to look through the mists and clouds for light, and to expect a bright day to dawn, when "the sun of righteousness" should dispel all shadows, and bring in, at his rising, the truth. Nay, God himself seemed to desire the change, when his worship on earth should be divested of parade and circumstance and formality, and become a worship in "spirit and in truth,"—as if those ceremonies had failed of their purpose, proved inefficacious, tended to superstition and outward homage alone, and were of necessity to be done away in consequence of their very abuse and profanation.

"To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord? Bring no more vain oblations. Incense is an abomination unto me. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me. I am weary to bear them."

In truth, this external service was considered oppressive and wearisome, even by those who best observed it, and who were most rigid and scrupulous in regard to its exact fulfillment. They felt themselves bound and fettered by it. The soul struggled under it for something more congenial and satisfactory; and, the greater the wisdom and sanctity of the worshipper, the more deeply was his spirit oppressed by the nature of this service.

We have evidence of this in the words of St. Peter, who, in the assembly at Jerusalem, rebuked those Judaizing

Christians, who would have kept up the old ceremonial, and have engrafted the law on the gospel by requiring the Gentile converts to obey Moses as well as Christ :—"Now, therefore, why tempt ye God—to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear ?"

But still,—it will be urged, perhaps,—Christianity should have its ceremonials as well as the law—worship *now* should be as attractive and imposing to the senses as in the Jewish church; and, therefore, other rites and ceremonies may be introduced, and may plead in warrant for their observance, the sanction of divine institution for ritualistic service under the Mosaic law. Thus; if priestly vestments and incense, and symbolic and imposing ritual were once acceptable to God, and entered as essentials into divine worship, why are they not important now, and why may they not be used as conducive to reverence, and as appropriate to the solemnities of the house of God ?

We have already replied to this, by showing that those rites and ceremonies had a meaning then, and until Christ, but none afterward,—that except in such representative or emblematic meaning they had no significance—that they were not instituted to give grandeur to worship, but to be figures as well of the acts of Christ as our great High Priest and atoning sacrifice, as of the cleansing of the Holy Spirit, under the gospel. Therefore, all this outward service has no pertinency *now*, and cannot be allowed. because Christ abolished it, both by fulfilling the law in its emblems, and by express injunction requiring his apostles to change these ritualistic customs, and do them utterly away.—But, we go on to say: that, if ceremonies and rites and ritualistic services were to be celebrated under the gospel, Jesus Christ would have established them himself, or by his apostles, and that these rites and ceremonies would have been part of the Christian economy, as they were of the Jewish, and their observance have been secured by

special statute, the same as under the law. For there is every reason that they should be set up under the gospel by Christ,—if they are essential to divine worship, or even conducive to its more solemn performance—every reason for their institution, that required them to be observed under the law. They would be just as imposing, just as grand, just as suggestive of spiritual ideas—all these symbols—as in former days. That none of them, then, were ordained by Christ, proves that they were never intended to be anything more than temporary and symbolical, and to last only until Christianity should come and introduce a simpler and purer worship, without emblems and types, because all emblems and types and ceremonial observances were fulfilled and terminated in Christ himself, who "was the end of the law," in that very sense.

Nor, my brethren, is it possible to suppose that Jesus Christ, with the temple service before him, in all its appointments and grandeur of external glory, would have passed over the whole subject of ritual, and never have said a single word, nor have done a single thing in relation to it; so that we search the New Testament in vain for the most distant intimation that there would or should be ceremonial under the gospel dispensation; but, that everything in Christ's teaching and manner and spirit has a contrary tendency; nay, that he foretold and enjoined the sweeping away of the whole cumbrous and outward system of Moses' establishment, by the power of the gospel.

Read his life and the acts of his apostles, and you will be convinced that he and they stand forth as the advocates, not for form and outward things, but for simplicity and realities, and the inward worship of the heart, "in the spirit and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God."

It was the charge against them, that they were opposed to ritualism, and were introducing the very opposite in religion—pulling down the temple, and disbanding the priest-

hood, and overturning altars, and extinguishing sacrificial fires, and stifling incense, and rending asunder temple-veils, and opening windows to let light into the dark shrines of shadow and superstition,—if not indeed with the axe of violence and the strong arm of power, (carnal weapons which Christianity needed not and never used,) yet,—by the hammer of the divine word, and by the spirit of God which spake by their lips. "These that have turned the world upside down have come hither also," cried some; "We have heard them speak against this holy place and the law, and say that Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered us," was the accusation of others.

We find Jesus Christ and his apostles, zealous about doctrines, teaching with all clearness what men must believe, and what they must do, to be saved; but when we go to them and ask, how men ought to worship, and what Christianity enjoins in regard to divine worship, we have no answer at all, but the memorable saying of the text:—"The hour cometh, and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him God is a spirit, and and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

My Brethren: worship will find its own simple expression when it is sincere and "in the spirit." Spiritual worship cannot endure ceremonies and display. These are a grand hindrance to the spirit seeking to lose itself and all outward things in devotion, and approach with all truth unto the invisible God, wrapt in its own deep meditations. Under the light of the gospel, and instructed by Jesus Christ, men are required to turn their thoughts from outward pomp and splendid ritual to the preparation of the inner temple of the heart, that God may be there enshrined, and that the incense of holy affection and devout aspiration may ascend before him, as a pleasing sacrifice.

And so, in reading the epistles of the apostles of Christ, worship, most important as it is, is not referred to as an established service. There are no priests ministering in Christian temples, nor any altars set up anywhere for them to serve, nor any duties or acts sacerdotal for them to discharge;—nothing—no trace, no name of priest or altar, no allusion, even, to any such sort of thing, as existing or established, or as about to be set up and allowed in the Christian Church; but, every injunction of any and of all the apostles; every sentence written of advice or of incidental reference, and the whole tone and tenor of each and of all the epistles go to the contrary state of things, and declare and demonstrate, that Christianity, as it knows no priesthood, no altar, no sacrifice on earth, so has it, in its worship, no symbolism; no ritualistic service; nothing of ceremonial law corresponding therewith.

But, we have yet to meet the retreating argument of those who have been driven from Bible ground, and compelled to make a stand on a less firm foundation. It is this: Ritualism is not positively forbidden, and we introduce it as fitting the age, and agreeable to our reverential feelings, and tending to promote devotion, and suitable in itself. Now, we do not admit the assertion that it is not forbidden. We say, on the contrary, that the abolition of Jewish ritual forbids the establishment of Christian symbolical ritual; that the spirit of Christianity forbids it likewise; that Christianity has nothing to symbolize, (if we except the two sacraments which Christ ordained expressly); that Jesus and his apostles not introducing it amounts to its prohibition; and that our text is clear to the point, that Christian worship should be the opposite of Jewish in this respect.

"God is a spirit." He has no outward form. Man is to worship the invisible, with his spiritual nature, and not with the outward homage chiefly, as if the glitter of outward material things were pleasing to the immaterial in-

finite God. It is the spirit that must worship; and the Father seeketh no more the bending of the knees, and the lifting up of the hands, and symbolic ceremony in the earthly sanctuary,—a bodily worship—but rather and instead, the homage of the heart,—that men under the gospel should "worship him in spirit and in truth," with a simple service.

And now; as to the propriety of "increased ritualism" in our Protestant Church. We ask with all reverence for ancient, divinely instituted usage,—what there is, that is imposing in the spectacle of men, of supposed sense and professed education, dressing themselves up in attire, strange and ludicrous, as well from its fantastic shape, as from its flimsy material, rendered more grotesque by antiquated copes and albs and chasubles and dalmatics with decorations of red, of green, or of purple and other ornaments fitting some pantomine acted to please children on a gala-day;—and increased yet more in its absurdity, by posture and grimace, and little boys dressed up in gay or sad garb, as the feast day or fast day may demand, bearing candles and crosses, and waiting upon self-constituted priests in their scenic performances—not to mention bowings and crossings and kneelings in queer ways and places, where they are sure to be seen and noticed of men? What is there impressive in these things? Does all this promote reverence and tend to devotion?

For myself, I could not look at it all without laughing outright at the weakness and folly and ridiculous appearance of these actors—through whose mummery a child can penetrate—were not my mirth checked by the thought of the sacredness of the place, and by my indignation at what I deem to be a profanation of God's house, a libel on Christianity, and an insult to the knowledge and common sense of the community, who, unlike people in the dark ages, out of which these absurdities are exhumed, can read the Bible for themselves, and judge too for themselves, without the

Church's teaching, what Christianity is—what it forbids and what it allows—what it has overthrown, and what it has established.

Nor, can I understand how two such pretended priests, arrayed like mountebanks, when they look at each other in the vestry, and form their little cortége with their boys to go into the church, before the people, can keep their countenances, in the solemn sham, and go through their parade without crimson cheeks, for very effeminacy—No—if ever device deserved to be driven from the temple with a whip of small cords, it is this presumptuous folly of stage performance by ministers in a Protestant Church—nor can it be denounced, ever, in terms too severe.

But, to what does this ritualistic movement tend, and why notice it? Its tendency, we assert, is directly to Romish error and to the Church of Rome—*There*, is the end of such ritualistic ceremony. They who engage in it believe *Protestantism to be a failure*—and they would inaugurate this ceremonial of childish invention and grown-up foolery to take its place. They would stand midway between the simple, chaste, elevated spiritual worship of the Protestant, and the gorgeous, splendid, jewelled idolatry of the Romanist, arrayed like the latter, as far as timid daring can go, and conceal even from themselves their traitor spirit, while they go through their imitations and genuflexions, all for what! but, to unprotestantise the Church to which they belong, and introduce into it, that spirit, and those ideas, which will transform its truth of doctrine into error, and its simplicity of worship into the ritual of that corrupt Church, from which our own was dissevered by martyrs' hands in Reformation-days.

If St. Paul declared of those who would introduce circumcision and its depending system into the Christian Church in his time—"as we have said before, so say I now again, though we, or an angel from heaven preach unto you any other gospel than that ye have received let him be

accursed,"—what shall we say of Ritualism, and those who would set it up in our Protestant Churches?—"Say nothing"—say some—"Let them alone; the evil will cure itself; the folly will be manifest unto all men; it will, if unnoticed, come to naught." My friends; this course has been tried already; for this evil has been sometime insinuating itself amongst us, and innoculating our Church with its Romish virus, and now, the disease has attained strength, and becomes visible in the countenance, changing the Protestant face with its truthful expression, into the deceitful visage of the Mother of abominations. We behold the plague-spots indicating disease at the vitals, and it is time to warn of danger and save from death.

This is no slight matter, no trifling innovation, or rather retrogression into the dark periods of the past, and cannot be allowed to work its destructive course unmolested, and unexposed, and uncondemned.

It presents itself in books of devotion used by our people; it is infused into works intended for the young; it appears under some form in public worship in many of our Churches; it is brought out in the dress and practices of not a few of our clergy. Churches are being arranged so as to give it prominence, and efforts are being made to mould our Protestant Church, gradually, into this Romish appearance, so that nothing outward shall remain to distinguish us from Romish worshippers.

"While men sleep, the enemy sow tares." It is time now for our Church to awake, and for all Protestants to understand that Ritualism is Romanism, inch for inch and step by step.

All this hankering after ceremony, is a hankering after the old errors and false doctrines, which those symbols and ceremonies represent, nor will the superstition be satisfied until it embraces Rome.

As the Church to which we belong has the title of "Protestant," so let it stiffly maintain its Protestant

character. Nothing more is demanded than that we abide by our old Protestant landmarks, and Protestant usages, and Protestant worship, as a Bible Church, with a Bible Liturgy, and a "Ministry of the Word," casting out the word "altar," and the word "sacrifice," and the word "priest," and maintaining that our worship knows nothing of such Romish things.

What, brethren, is Christian worship? It is the service of the heart, the homage of the soul, inward reverence, produced by the power of the Word, and by devout meditation, and by the Spirit of God moving upon the inner man; not by impressions made upon the senses, by scenic arrangements, and ceremonial pomp, and architectural grandeur, and human device. There is a proneness in man to substitute the outward for the inward, and to imagine that the solemnity of mind and elevation of soul, induced by illusions of art and mental association, are true devotion. Whereas the same feelings may be excited in a heathen temple of lofty structure, or within the walls of a theatre, where no thought of divine worship is entertained. Nothing has done more to corrupt religion and to pervert truth than the indulgence of this propensity. The departure from primitive simplicity brought with it every error. The history of the Eastern churches and of the church of Rome abundantly testifies into what awful darkness, outward pomp and ceremony, tending to exalt a priesthood and increase the arrogance of prelatic power, shall conduct those who allow its growth. This shall destroy the gospel and render it of no effect. This shall introduce fatal error, and sink men in ignorance and spiritual delusion. It is almost a maxim, the more the outward, the less the inward, in religious things.

What a grand impertinence, what an interruption to solemn thought, and introspection, and abstraction from earth, is a chancel set out with burnished vessels of gold and silver, where are splendid altar-cloths, adorned with

embroidery and crosses, candles burning by day, on lofty candlesticks placed on an altar, (itself a high structure, and not a table, as the Prayer Book requires,) and surpliced priests, sitting in stalls, or kneeling with their faces to the altar—falsely so called—in studied solemnity of manner; bowings and crossings, and processions back and forth, and tinkling of bells, and elevating of sacred vessels, with boys in attendance dressed in cassocks, performing their part in the parade—I say—what an interruption is all this to the devout worshipper—for all this scene is intended to be looked at by the people ; it is done for effect; and who can behold this pantomine, and, at the same time, "worship God in spirit and in truth ?"

And, shall these men, who presume thus to change our simple service * by these childish performances and scenic exhibitions and symbolical representations teaching false doctrines, escape censure and be permitted to go on in their work ? We answer, no ! not without the voice of protest and warning from every Protestant pulpit in the land, and that, uttered with no uncertain sound.

We have a right to demand, that our worship shall remain as heretofore—the same as in the days of our fathers—and, in all places of public worship the same—as it was of old. As no church of our communion may close the Prayer Book, and set up extemporaneous services to suit the fancies of one set of men, so, can no minister or congregation of ours add to the services of our church anything of their own devising, increasing ceremonies and pomp, to please the notions of another set of men—without each subjecting itself to deserved censure, and that censure must be uttered, that such evils may not spread, but *our Church remain, in its doctrine, in its discipline, in its worship, in appearance, and in reality, a Protestant Church.*

* See Note.

END.

[OVER.]

# NOTE.

The use of clerical vestments has no sanction in the New Testament Scriptures, and cannot be traced to the primitive age. It is to be regarded as a matter of human institution, and of doubtful expediency. The early introduction into the Church of Christ, of rites and ceremonies, and official robes, *can be accounted for on other grounds* than a desire to promote the glory of God and the edification of his people.

The exaltation of the ministers of the sanctuary to a priestly and regal rank, by an appearance of state and outward dignity, was very early the object of clerical ambition, and the fruitful cause of worldliness and of the decay of true religion in the Church. State policy also favored in some degree ecclesiastical pomp. Robes and ceremonies, and processions and days of grand display with a sort of regal pomp, gradually obtained—increasing as piety declined, and becoming at last almost *the all* of religion that remained when the Reformation gave rise to Protestantism.

"In this (the second) century," says the learned ecclesiastical historian Dr. Mosheim, "many unnecessary rites and ceremonies were added to the Christian worship, "the introduction of which was extremely offensive to wise and good men. These "changes, while they destroyed the beautiful simplicity of the Gospel, were natu- "rally pleasing to the gross multitude, who are more delighted with the pomp and "splendor of external institutions, than with the native charms of rational and solid "piety, and who generally give but little attention to any objects but those which "strike their outward senses—a circumstance favorable to the ambitious views of "the clergy, since the pomp of religion naturally casts a part of its glory upon its "ministers, and thereby gives them imperceptibly a vast ascendant over the minds "of the people."

At the Reformation, the Church of England, while sweeping away a vast deal of error in doctrine and of absurdity in ceremonies, kept up the latter in simpler form, not however without opposition from some of the most learned of her Bishops and Preshyters.*

These scrupled the wearing of the clerical habits, and yielded with reluctance to the commands of the semi-papal Queen whose will was law in such matters. The enforcement of uniformity in ritual subsequently drove out the Puritans, who stiffly refused such compliance. In the opinion of many, it had been a wiser policy, and one which had tended to the unity of Protestants, to have abolished the clerical vestments altogether, and to have put the English Church in this respect on the same footing with the Reformed Churches on the Continent.

The "Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical" (1603) render it obligatory on the Clergy of the Church of England, "to wear a surplice while reading divine service and administering the sacraments"; but "the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States" is not subject to these Canons, and *has no law but custom or usage* in regard to clerical habits. The clergy have, until a late period, respected this law in our venerable Church.

The surplice, black gown, cassock and bands are the only clerical vestments sanctioned by such usage. The surplice, as in England, has been worn "while read-

* See "*Zurich Letters*, or the Correspondence of several English Bishops and others, with some of the Helvetian Reformers, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, chiefly from the Archives of Zurich."

ing the service and administering the sacraments," and *the gown on all other occasions of public services, and always and especially when preaching the Word.*

Whoever deviates from such custom, established by long usage, breaks the order of the Church.

Preaching in a surplice is just as contrary to the law of custom as would be reading prayers and administering the sacraments in a black gown. Either deviation from usage is censurable, and must lead to a practical abrogation of the law and the doing away with uniformity in clerical vestments. For, if some of the clergy retain the surplice and reject the gown, others with the same liberty may retain the gown and reject the surplice, while yet others may claim the right, inasmuch as the law of custom has been thus disregarded, to reject both these garments, and officiate, as well in public prayers and sacraments as in preaching, in ordinary dress.

Moreover, if the fantastic changes in clerical attire to which reference has been made in the sermon, be introduced, and what are called "ritualistic" practices be allowed to prevail in our Church, it will become a serious question with many of the clergy *opposed to these innovations—as being contrary to custom, to the truth of doctrine and to edification in public worship*—whether it will not be incumbent on them to enter their solemn protest against such mummery, by laying aside all use of clerical vestments, as no longer proper, but made detrimental by abuse.

"An ecclesiastical custom," says that distinguished writer Bishop Jeremy Taylor, "must be reasonable or useful, or it cannot oblige the conscience—except to avoid "scandal (offence). Customs must be kept when the breaking of them is scandalous "(*i. e.* gives offence). But, excepting this case, an unreasonable custom does not "oblige, *for no man is bound to be a fool or to do a foolish action.* Now, a custom in "canon law is concluded to be *reasonable if it tends to the good of the soul.*"

The reader can judge whether, under the teaching of such an eminent churchman and casuist as Dr. Jeremy Taylor, conscientious men would not be justified in freeing themselves from a law which "bound them to be fools," by "doing such foolish actions" as are coming into vogue in our Church in our day, especially when such ritualistic innovations plainly "*tend*" *not* "*to the good of the soul*"—and *are* "*repugnant to the Word of God*"—yet, are not "rebuked openly" as "offences against the common order of the Church." (Article 34th, Book of Common Prayer.)

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